This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended)   A method of providing a content item to a plurality of <u>user devices</u> ~~users~~, comprising:

defining a collective earning threshold;

receiving a total collective payment from the plurality of <u>user devices</u> ~~users~~, wherein the total collective payment includes a plurality of individual user payments that are each contributed by a respective one of the plurality of <u>user devices</u> ~~users~~;

transmitting the content item at a premium quality level when the total collective payment is greater than or equal to the collective earning threshold; and

transmitting the content item at an impaired quality level when the total collective payment is less than the collective earning threshold.

2.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of defining a collective earning threshold comprises selecting a threshold value from a time-varying threshold function.

3.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of awarding a prize to one or more ~~of the plurality of~~ users according to a prize criterion.

4.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 3, wherein the awarding step comprises awarding a prize to the user that has contributed the largest of the individual user payments.

5.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting the content item at a downgraded quality comprises reducing the resolution of images included in the content item.

6.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting the content item at an impaired quality comprises reducing the size of one or more images included in the content item.

7.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting the content item at an impaired quality comprises increasing the distortion of audio signals included in the content item.

8.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein the step of transmitting the content item at an impaired quality comprises interrupting transmission of the content item.

9.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting a request for additional individual user payments to the plurality of user devices ~~users~~ when the total collective payment is less than the collective earning threshold.

10.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of transmitting a request for additional individual user payments to the plurality of user devices

~~users~~ when the total collective payment is within a predetermined range of the collective earning threshold.

11.   (Currently Amended)   A system for providing a content item to a plurality of <u>user devices</u> ~~users~~, comprising:

       means for defining a collective earning threshold;

       means for receiving a total collective payment from the plurality of <u>user devices</u> ~~users~~, wherein the total collective payment includes a plurality of individual user payments that are each contributed by a respective one of the plurality of <u>user devices</u> ~~users~~;

       means for transmitting the content item at a premium quality level when the total collective payment is greater than or equal to the collective earning threshold; and

       means for transmitting the content item at an impaired quality level when the total collective payment is less than the collective earning threshold.

12.   (Original)   The system of claim 11, wherein the means for defining a collective earning threshold comprises selecting a threshold value from a time-varying threshold function.

13.   (Currently Amended)   The system of claim 11, further comprising means for awarding a prize to one or more ~~of the plurality of~~ users according to a prize criterion.

14.   (Currently Amended)   The system of claim 13, wherein the awarding step comprises means for awarding a prize to <u>a user of</u> the user <u>device</u> that has contributed the largest of the individual user payments.

15.   (Original)   The system of claim 11, wherein the means for transmitting the content item at a downgraded quality comprises means for reducing the resolution of images included in the content item.

16.   (Original)   The system of claim 11, wherein the means for transmitting the content item at an impaired quality comprises means for reducing the size of one or more images included in the content item.

17.   (Original)   The system of claim 11, wherein the means for transmitting the content item at an impaired quality comprises means for increasing the distortion of audio signals included in the content item.

18.   (Original)   The system of claim 11, wherein the means for transmitting the content item at an impaired quality comprises means for interrupting transmission of the content item.

19.   (Currently Amended)   The system of claim 11, further comprising means for transmitting a request for additional individual user payments to the plurality of user devices ~~users~~ when the total collective payment is less than the collective earning threshold.

20.   (Currently Amended)   The system of claim 11, further comprising means for transmitting a request for additional individual user payments to the plurality of user devices

~~users~~ when the total collective payment is within a predetermined range of the collective earning threshold.

21.   (Currently Amended)   A computer program product comprising a computer useable medium having computer program logic recorded thereon for enabling a processor in a computer system to provide a content item over a network to a plurality of <u>user devices</u> ~~users~~, the computer program logic comprising:

program code for enabling the processor to receive one or more individual user payments;

program code for enabling the processor to compare a sum of the individual user payments to a collective earning threshold;

program code for enabling the processor to transmit the content item at a premium quality level when the total collective payment is greater than or equal to the collective earning threshold; and

program code for enabling the processor to transmit the content item at an impaired quality level when the total collective payment is less than the collective earning threshold.

22.   (Currently Amended)   A method of providing a content item to a plurality of <u>user devices</u> ~~users~~, comprising:

defining a collective earning threshold;

receiving a total collective payment from the plurality of <u>user devices</u> <s>users</s>,

wherein the total collective payment includes a plurality of individual user payments that are

each contributed by a respective one of the plurality of <u>user devices</u> <s>users</s>; and

scheduling the content item for transmission when the total collective payment is

greater than or equal to the collective earning threshold.

23.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of

identifying a stale payment when the total collective payment is less than the

collective earning threshold; and

providing a content item reselection opportunity to the user <u>device</u> that placed the

stale payment.

24.   (Currently Amended)   A system for providing a content item to a plurality of <u>user</u>

<u>devices</u> <s>users</s>, comprising:

means for defining a collective earning threshold;

means for receiving a total collective payment from the plurality of <u>user devices</u>

<s>users</s>, wherein the total collective payment includes a plurality of individual user payments that

are each contributed by a respective one of the plurality of <u>user devices</u> <s>users</s>; and

means for scheduling the content item for transmission when the total collective

payment is greater than or equal to the collective earning threshold.

25.   (Currently Amended)   A computer program product comprising a computer

useable medium having computer program logic recorded thereon for enabling a processor in a

computer system to provide a content item over a network to a plurality of <u>user devices</u> <s>users</s>, the computer program logic comprising:

program code for enabling the processor to define a collective earning threshold;

program code for enabling the processor to receive a total collective payment from the plurality of <u>user devices</u> <s>users</s>, wherein the total collective payment includes a plurality of individual user payments that are each contributed by a respective one of the plurality of <u>user devices</u> <s>users</s>; and

program code for enabling the processor to schedule the content item for transmission when the total collective payment is greater than or equal to the collective earning threshold.

26.   (Currently Amended)   A method of providing a content item to a plurality of <u>user devices</u> <s>users</s>, comprising:

defining a collective earning threshold;

receiving a total collective payment from the plurality of <u>user devices</u> <s>users</s>, wherein the total collective payment includes a plurality of individual user payments that are each contributed by a respective one of the plurality of <u>user devices</u> <s>users</s>; and

transmitting the content item in a manner that is based on a comparison between the total collective payment and the collective earning threshold.

27.   (Original)   A wireless communications device for receiving a content item from a content provider, the wireless communications device comprising:

means for selecting a content item from a list of content item offerings provided by the content provider;

means for sending an individual user payment for the selected content item to the content provider;

means for receiving a revenue indicator from the content provider, the revenue indicator indicating a comparison between a total collective payment and a collective earning threshold, wherein the total collective payment includes the individual user payment and one or more payments from other wireless communications devices; and

means for receiving the selected content item from the content provider in a manner that is determined by the comparison between the total collective payment and the collective earning threshold.